

SPHAEROPSIS KNOT OF CITRUS IN FLORIDA

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The fungus Sphaeropsis tumefaciens Hedges, the cause of Sphaeropsis knot, is occasionally found attacking some species of citrus in Florida. Hedges (4) first reported the disease in 1904 from Jamaica on Key lime, *Citrus aurantiifolia* (Christm.) Swingle. In 1911 this disease was reported from Florida (5) and has since been found in all citrus-growing areas of the state. Key lime, rough lemon, *C. limon* (L.) Burm. , and Ortanique (a natural hybrid tangerine X orange) are most commonly attacked by the fungus in Jamaica (1,2); whereas in Florida, Key lime, sweet orange, *C. sinensis* (L.) Osbeck, and calamondin, *C. madurensis* Lour. (*C. mitis* Blanco) are hosts.

SYMPTOMS. The knots are rounded, woody growths, at first covered with nearly normal, light-colored bark but later becoming dark, rough and fissured (Fig. 1). The knots, which may be found on trees of any age, vary from 3/8 inch to 2 or 3 inches in diameter and occur singly or in a series along the branch. The knots usually give rise to a large number of buds which produce crowded sprouts, commonly called witches' broom. Numerous knots may girdle a branch and cause dieback (5). The causal agent is also frequently found in Florida attacking Natal plum, *Carissa grandiflora* DC.

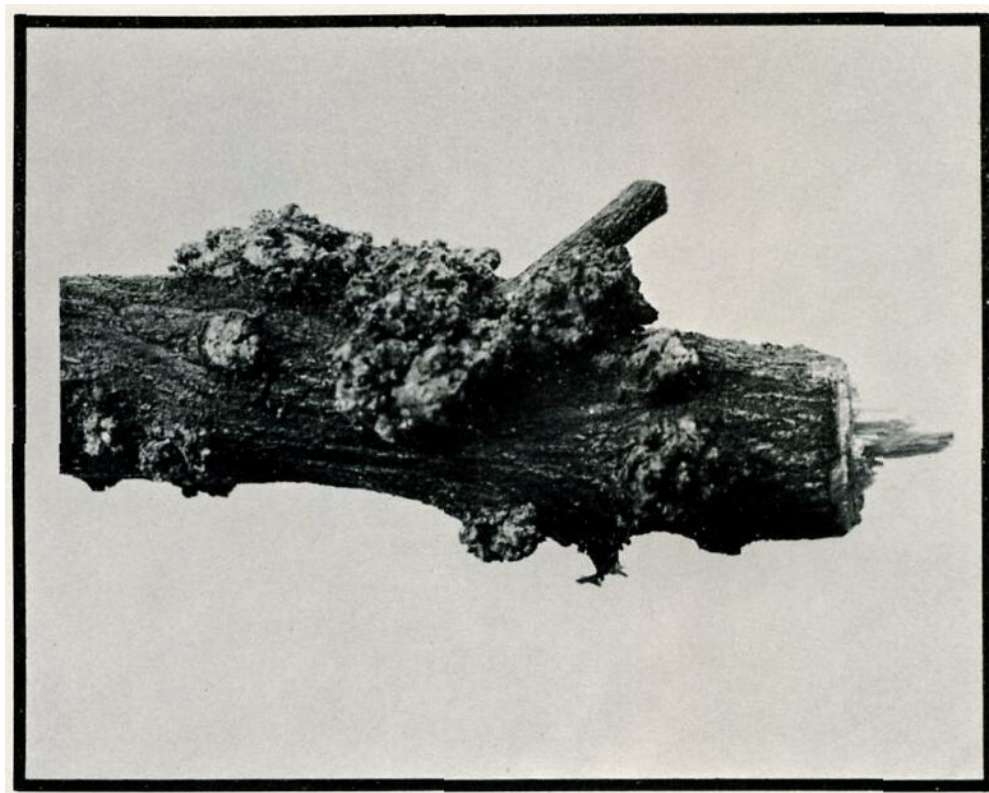


Fig. 1. Sphaeropsis knot of citrus.

CONTROL. Sphaeropsis knot is not sufficiently serious in Florida to warrant chemical control measures. Pruning out and burning infected limbs will usually eradicate the disease (3).

#### Literature Cited

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